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ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPTION OF MARIE BARTLETT

Barbara Skryja conducting interview at Green Valley History Day
11/6/1999

MB My name is Marie Bartlett and my maiden name was Johnson, we lived on the Kauffman Ranch right across from the school. We were the closest to the school.

BS What years did you live there?

MB We lived there from about 1922 – 1929. Across the creek from what was the Sinclair place, I don't know who owns it any more. I was born in the house there on that ranch. My fathers family are most all farmers and ranchers.

BS But your fathers family originally settled in Cloverdale?

MB Yes

BS How about on the other side of your family?

MB My mothers family was from Kansas, they lived in Sebastopol near Graton.

BS What was your mothers maiden name?

MB Myrtle Daniels and my fathers name was Amertos(?) My grandmother Johnson was born in Benecia. My grandfather Johnson was born back east (New Jersey?) And my mother's father's name was Silas, I think born in Missouri and my grandmother was born in Kansas, her name was Eva Anderson. And my mother was born in Kansas too.

BS Have you heard any stories of what may have brought your family to this area.

MB Not really. I don't know if they leased the Sanclares(?) orchard or what.

BS They where farmers, apple farmers?

MB Yes. They all worked on the ranch. When my grandfather died, my grandmother moved into Graton. Her name was Ella Langdon.

BS Tell us about your life growing up and your connection to Graton and Green Valley.

MB My dad worked for Mr. Kauffman on the Kauffman ranch. WE lived there for 7 years. My childhood was on the ranch and this school. Lived directly across the road from the school. Very close.

BS Did you go to the old school

MB That's where I started. Do you know what month the school burnt? Because I remember that we had been at the school that day for maybe Halloween party (maybe October) and there were a lot of papers from decorations and paper plates. A teacher put them in this old wood stove and then that night the school caught on fire. They said the fire was suspicious but they never found the cause. My father was trustee of the school at the time.

BS So in your family the old wood stove got too hot?

MB Yes, because it went up through the wood ceiling and it was just too hot.

BS What was it like in that school? How many rooms?

MB You entered in a big long room we called the Annie Room and it had hooks to hang our coats. Then a big room for the school and the all went into this room. There were about 42 students the year the school burned down. Mrs. Cora Elbie was the teacher at the time. Not sure on the spelling.

BS Since your father was a trustee, was he involved in rebuilding the school?

MB No, after the fire we moved from the Kauffman ranch into Graton because of transportation. Kids were sent to Oak Grove School after the fire.

BS You didn't ever go back to the school?

MB Yes, I went back when I was in the 7th grade. And graduated from 8th grade there in 1933. I was two years behind because I started the 1st grade three time because I had health problems.

BS Did your mother home school you then?

MB No, they didn't do that. I had to have surgery on my neck and something else the next year. I just couldn't catch up so started the 1st grade over.

BS Do you remember any childhood friends?

MB There were three sets of sisters. My sister and me and then two other sets of sisters. Virginia & Mable Hall and the other was Atha and Lois Tallman. My sisters name was Wilma. And my brother Miles went there too. There was always one group of sisters that were on the out. But we all said we were

cousins. My uncle married the Halls grandmothers sister that was on my mothers side. On my fathers side my aunt Mary the Tallman's was their uncle. The Tallman's married my grandfathers sister. The others one was my grandfathers brother married their grandfathers sister. So we'd known each other practically all our lives.

BS How many other girls were in the same class.

MB Mable and Atha were in my class. Virginia was a little older. My sister Wilma and Lois were in the same class.

BS What types of this would you do at the school?

MB We'd play baseball and volleyball. We had swings. Not all the girls went back to the school after is was rebuilt. Mabe did, but the Tallman's lived closer to Oak Grove, so they just stayed there.

When we moved back we lived on Thomas Rd. on a place called the Noble Ranch. We rented a house and lived out there. Mrs. Bufford was the teacher then. That was for the upper grades.

I had a cousin, Erma Johnson, in 7-8th grade. Different people would give us milk on the way to school and we would make hot chocolate. This was during the depression.

BS What were your favorite subjects?

MB I didn't really have a favorite, but my least favorite is History and I still don't like it. I can't remember how many graduated at the same time. Mable Hall for sure, maybe one other and Bill Barnes. Must have been 6 or 8 of us. The kids did entertainment on stages, someone gave a speech and then we got a diploma. I didn't save it.

I remember that to get to Analy High School I too the street car to school. I went to Analy for two years and didn't go back. I got married at 19 to Charles Bartlett. Married in 1937. I worked at Palm Drive then Sebastopol Convalescent Hospital. Then we managed some apartments. Now I'm just retired and doing what old people do. I live in Clearlake now.

BS What are the names of your children?

MB My oldest is Charles and he passed away this year. And then Thomas, Owen (is here today) Floranne. Owen graduated from Green Valley. Floranne went to school there for awhile, but didn't graduate from there.

BS When you were first married where did you live?

MB In Sebastopol, and then in Green Valley for awhile.

BS And what did your husband do?

MB He was a contractor. Built houses.

BS Going back to the sister groups, do you still see any of them?

MB Well Mabel married my husbands brother. And Virginia is dead. I don't know about the Tallman girls.

BS When you were in school were there other groups of girls?

MB It was a small school. It was more like a family school because it was so small. All the kids played together. If you could hit a ball you got to play.

What year did they stop having classes there? When Owen and his sister went to school there they were trying to close it then. I remember a group of us went to Santa Rosa, that was in maybe 1951. I stood up and found for the school. The big problem with closing it would be transportation to a school further away. Some people said that the young children were not learning enough because they are being distracted from all the other things going on in the same room. I didn't go along with that at all.

BS Was there ever an assignment given to students and then maybe the older kids would help the younger ones?

MB Sometimes. After lunch everyday the teacher would read to everyone in the room. It was stories that all ages could understand. Music classes included everyone. Nature studies were for everyone. We did many thing together. We learned more that way, learned to give and help.

BS Were you nature for field trips to places that you walked to?

MB Most of them we walked, sometime parents would take us if it was too far to walk. One time we went to Vallejo to see a ship that was there. An old Navy ship, I think it was Old Ironsides. It was a sail boat. And they took us to other places like General Vallejo's home. But a lot was nature studies and we walked.

BS We there mostly women teachers?

MB Yes, all the teachers were women.

BS Did they live in the area or did they come from Santa Rosa?

MB Mrs. Crane lived in Rincon Valley. She was a Miller and during the week she stayed with the family. Mrs. Darby lived in Sebastopol and she drove out. Her husband was Judge Darby. Mrs. Albie was from Sebastopol. Mrs. Buffard lived in Santa Rosa. Mrs. Crane started when my brother was in school. They went from September to June from 8:30 – 2 for grades 1-3 and 8:30 – 3 for 4-8th graders.

We all brought our own lunches. Boys wore pants, Girls wore dresses. The things we did at school was swing or play ball because that was all we had. The older boys did janitor work.

BS Do you remember any special things that would happen at school that changed the normal day activities?

MB Sometimes the school nurse would come out and the county superintendent came out one time. We had music appreciation where performers would come out to let us experience that.

They would always ring a bell to tell us when recess was over. Once my brother and Jack Marks were ringing the bell and they rang it so hard the bell fell off. The bell was in the belfry and it fell to the ground.

END OF TAPE